

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0057

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: QADHAFI ON STUDENT TROUBLES

REF: TRIPOLI 0036, TRIPOLI 0044

1. SUMMARY: AT A TELEVISED MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS, QADHAFI DISCUSSED THE STUDENT TROUBLES LAST WEEK IN BENGHAZI AND THE SUBSEQUENT OCCUPATION OF THE LIBYAN EMBASSIES IN CAIRO, LONDON, AND WASHINGTON BY LIBYAN STUDENTS. QADHAFI CLAIMED THAT NO ONE HAD BEEN KILLED DURING THE TROUBLES IN BENGHAZI, AND BLAMED THE OCCUPATIONS OF EMBASSIES ON FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES. STUDENTS WERE BEING MISLED BY FALSE CHARGES SPREAD BY ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION. QADHAFI'S DENIAL THAT THERE WERE DEATHS IN BENGHAZI IS UNCONVINCING, AND HE IS CLEARLY ON THE DEFENSIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. QADHAFI ARRIVED AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS MORNING OF JANUARY 14 IN A TRUCULENT MOOD, AND AFTER ORDERING THE CONGRESS TO STOP APPLAUDING HIM, LAUNCHED INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE STUDENT VIOLENCE IN BENGHAZI AND SUBSEQUENT

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PROTESTS BY LIBYAN STUDENTS ABROAD. WHAT HAD HAPPENED AT BENGHAZI

UNIVERSITY, HE SAID, WAS PROOF THAT THERE WAS A REAL POPULAR REVOLUTION IN THE COUNTRY. BEFORE HE HAD DECIDED TO ORGANIZE A STUDENT UNION, STUDENTS HAD PAID NO ATTENTION TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONS. THE VIOLENCE AND THE SHOOTING AT THE UNIVERSITY WERE A RESULT OF NEW STUDENT INTEREST IN THE REVOLUTION, AND IT WAS AN HONOR TO THE COUNTRY. "LET THERE BE SHOOTING, AND EVEN DEATHS, IT IS ALL RIGHT."

3. THE OCCUPATION OF LIBYAN EMBASSIES IN CAIRO AND LONDON, HOWEVER, WAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MATTER, QADHAFI SAID. IT WAS A RESULT OF THE RECRUITMENT AND MOBILIZATION OF STUDENTS BY EGYPTIAN AND BRITISH INTELLIGENCE. QADHAFI WAS ESPECIALLY UPSET ABOUT CAIRO. HE SAID POINTEDLY THAT THERE WERE EGYPTIANS AT LIBYAN UNIVERSITIES, AND 250,000 EGYPTIAN WORKERS IN LIBYA, BUT EVEN AFTER THE SHAMEFUL KILOMETER 101 AGREEMENT AND SINAI II, EVEN AFTER THE VISIT OF THE U.S. PRESIDENT TO EGYPT, THEY HAD NOT DEMONSTRATED AGAINST EGYPT. EGYPTIANS WERE PATRIOTS. INSIDE EGYPT THEY WOULD FIGHT AND DEMONSTRATE, BUT NOT OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. LIBYAN STUDENTS, HOWEVER, WENT AROUND SCREAMING ABOUT DICTATORSHIP, MASSACRES, MAKING FOOLS OF THEMSELVES. PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT TEN KILLED, TWENTY KILLED, GOD KNOWS. "NOT A SINGLE PERSON WAS KILLED", QADHAFI CLAIMED ECHOING A PREVIOUS OFFICIAL STATEMENT ISSUED IN THE NAME OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

4. AT THIS POINT QADHAFI WAS HANDED A NOTE INFORMING HIM THAT HIS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD ALSO BEEN OCCUPIED BY STUDENT, AND HE ANNOUNCED THIS NEWS TO THE CONGRESS, MUTTERING THAT "OF COURSE, AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE WAS BEHIND THIS TOO."

5. QADHAFI THEN TRIED TO SHIFT TO ANOTHER SUBJECT, BUT WAS OBVIOUSLY UNABLE TO STOP TALKING ABOUT THE STUDENT TROUBLES. WE OUGHT TO TEACH HISTORY TO OUR STUDENT, HE SAID, AND THEY SHOULD READ ABOUT PETER THE HERMIT. HE WENT AROUND IN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES WITH HIS CLOTHES TORN, PREACHING LIES ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DESECRATION OF CHRISTIAN HOLY PLACES BY MUSLIMS. PEOPLE IN EUROPE, WHO WERE IGNORANT AT THAT TIME, HAD FOLLOWED HIM, MAY DIED AS A RESULT. THEY WERE MISLED, JUST AS OUR STUDENTS HAVE BEEN MISLED.

6. JUST YESTERDAY, QADHAFI SAID, THREE DELEGATIONS OF STUDENTS CAME TO ME, ALL OF THEM IN FEAR OF THEIR LIVES, BECAUSE THEY WERE BEING ATTACKED BY OTHER STUDENTS. ONE

COMPLAINED HE HAD BEEN LOCKED IN A ROOM FULL OF GAS,
ANOTHER THAT HE HAD BEEN THREATENED WITH A REVOLVER.
ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING INSIDE THE UNIVERSITY,
STUDENTS AGAINST STUDENTS.

7. IN ANY CASE, QADHAFI SAID, THERE HAD BEEN VIOLENCE
BEFORE, IN 1973, DURING THE "POPULAR REVOLUTION",
PEOPLE HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED FOR INJURIES, AND ONE
FELLOW HAD BEEN THROWN DOWN A WELL. THIS WAS NOTHING NEW.
IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT STUDENTS IN CAIRO, LONDON, AND
WASHINGTON WERE ACTING IN THE INTEREST OF IMPERIALISM AND
ZIONISM, AND AGAINST ARAB NATIONALISM AND ARAB UNITY.
THEY WERE DEFYING THE REVOLUTION, AND HE WOULD ACCEPT
THE CHALLENGE. AS HE HAD SAID IN HIS SPEECH ON
SEPTEMBER 1, HE WOULD PUNISH OPPOSITION WITH AN
IRON HAND. THEY WOULD SEE.

8. NOW THE WHOLE WORLD KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS, QADHAFI
SAID, EVERYTHING WAS OUT IN THE OPEN IN LIBYA. HE HAD
TALKED YESTERDAY TO THE VISITING ALGERIAN MINISTER, AN
ENVOY FROM BOUMEDIENE, AND THE MINISTER HAD TOLD HIM HOW
MARVELOUS THE DEMOCRATIC OPENESS OF THE CONGRESS WAS.
THE REASON OTHER ARAB LEADERS COULD NOT DO THE SAME
THING IN THEIR COUNTRIES WAS THAT THEY WERE "NOT CLEAN",
AND HAD NO CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES. IN LIBYA, THE LEADER-
SHIP WAS CLEAN AND OPEN.

9. COMMENT: QADHAFI IS ON THE DEFENSIVE, AND HIS
DEFENSE IS A WEAK ONE. HIS CLAIMS THAT (A) THE TROUBLES
WERE A RESULT OF THE "REVOLUTIONARY" PROCESS HE LAUNCHED
HIMSELF, (B) ANYWAY NO ONE WAS KILLED, AND (C) THE
OCCUPATION OF LIBYAN EMBASSIES ABROAD IS THE FAULT OF FOREIGN
INTELLIGENCE WILL NOT WASH. IT IS NONSENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE
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VIOLENT ANTI-QADHAFI STUDENT PROTESTS IN BENGHAZI WERE SIMPLY AN
NATURAL OUTGROWTH OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.
NO ONE IN TRIPOLI BELIEVES THAT THERE WERE
NO PEOPLE KILLED IN BENGHAZI, AND FEW PEOPLE
WILL GIVE ANY CREDIT TO QADHAFI'S WILD ACCUSATIONS AGAINST
FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.
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